

Dear Commissioners:

Stop hidden phone fees so I can truly compare prices of phone services. I support the petition filed by the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates and endorsed by other consumer advocacy organizations. CG Docket No. 04-208, Petition for Declaratory Ruling Regarding Truth-In-Billing and Billing Format, is long overdue.

Phone bills should be truthful and easy to understand. I have encountered the same deception with false charges that are cryptically listed on the average telephone bill (when you call to check on the true nature of the charges the customer service reps are trained to evade your questions, or basically advise you that you have no choice), and have discontinued using landline phone from the local phone company. These companies have become arrogant because they have had little competition in the past, and probably feel that they will not truly be held accountable because of their size, and company attorneys. Many businesses have chosen to revert back to the old way of imposing whatever they wish upon the consumer, while the consumer is forced to either accept the unfair business practice in favor of having a needed service, or declining and going without what they need.

I will have to commend the FCC for seeing to the dismantling of these practices. It may even restore some of my faith in our government.

Because this practice is tolerated by the FCC, long distance and wireless phone companies are able to hide the true cost of service. These add-ons make the advertised price of service significantly less than the amount of the check I have to write each month to pay the bill. Competition will not work if consumers cannot accurately compare prices when shopping for service.

Many states are stepping up to address this problem. They should be allowed to proceed. However, the FCC shouldn't shirk its responsibility, nor limit states from doing more.

The FCC should immediately grant the NASUCA petition to investigate billing practices, and prohibit phone and wireless companies from imposing separate monthly fees, line items or surcharges unless expressly mandated by law or the charge is expressly authorized by a governmental authority.